

# Mainstream

by SPIEGEL

"Be bop a Lula, She's muh baby. Be bop a Lula, don' mean maybe . . ." and so go the lyrics, the music not being much better. A few weeks ago this song was number three throughout the St. Lawrence Valley. Other songs in the top ten at the time included: Chattanooga Choo Choo, Beatnik Fly, O Dio Mio, and Rockin' Little Angel. It makes you wonder about the St. Lawrence Valley, doesn't it?

These records are all part of the lowest common denominator (lcd) which record companies are selling the buying public. The music itself is generally worse than poor, and is sold on either the sex appeal of the artist, the intensity of the promotional program, or, in most cases, a combination of both. It is very rare that an artist's talent alone sells one of these "top forty" records.

It's about time the record industry came of age. Likewise it's about time station programmers became more discreet in the sides that they pick for their listeners to hear.

The unfortunate position that commercial radio is in today was brought about by the necessity of making a living. A station will get more listeners by playing talentless music, it will more than likely do so for the simple reason that it is in business to support itself and make a profit. On the other hand, a college station is not hampered by the prospect of having to make a living for itself. Nor does it have to please the local village gentry with "lcd" type music. College DJ's are allowed to program their own shows, and the temptation of the pay-off does not exist. There is but one reason why "top forty" music should be played over WNTC, and that is because a substantial number of listeners want that kind of music. But now comes the sixty-four dollar question: Do listeners really want to hear as much of the unintelligent music that is being sent over the college station?

It is extremely difficult to answer such a question without actually asking the listeners themselves. And even after asking the listeners, the results cannot be looked upon as anything but meager public opinion.

It is with this in mind that I wish to call to your attention some of the results in a recent poll undertaken by Michael Tuchman, director of publicity for WNTC. According to the findings, 17.5 percent of the students interviewed on both campuses wanted to hear more rock and roll over the station. 18.5 percent of those interviewed wanted the same amount played, and 64.0 percent wanted less. This was but only one category of the poll. In the light classical

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category, the results ran like this: 19.7 percent wanted less, 35.7 percent wanted the same, and 44.6 percent wanted to hear more. In the "Swing Music" category, 12.0 percent wanted less, 44.0 percent wanted the same, and 44.0 percent wanted more. In addition to this, 56 percent of those who answered one of the questions, suggested the complete removal of rock and roll from WNTC, and 21 percent listed THE Popular Classics as their favorite show. Although these results cannot be claimed as positive proof of the need for a turnover in the programming policy, they are nonetheless extremely significant.

The argument for better music, however, does not have to lie completely in the throes of a popularity contest. Just because a number of listeners want to hear the music they're used to hearing over their hometown station, is certainly no valid reason for programming such trash. The college radio station owes it to the listener to play the sensible type of music not always heard over commercial stations. WNTC, through intelligent programming, is actually capable of developing a better station than its commercial competitors. It is only through the better use of music that the college station can raise the standards of a potentially good media, and in turn expose its listeners to music which they deserve to hear.

This column is not meant to be a slam against WNTC. It is merely to point up a situation which has existed far too long in the commercial field and now in the college media. Knowing the good intentions of WNTC I can only hope that future changes in programming will not sacrifice quality for mass appeal. Every opportunity is available for a better quality of music. It is up to the station to take advantage of this, and let the listener become acquainted with some more of the worth while sounds. Whether it be Mendelssohn, Monk, or Nantovani, at least it offers the listener a stepup.